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December 18, 2020

(VIA EMAIL)

**Honourable Jason Kenney, Premier of Alberta  
Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Chief Medical Officer of Health**

This is an urgent message, and we would appreciate your urgent and immediate attention.

The core principle to prevent the spread of COVID 19 is one of “social distancing”. Every other public health measure is largely an extension of this principle.

Recent steps to limit customer counts in retail stores to a 15% threshold are clearly steps in the right direction. There are, however, some clear deficiencies in this approach that are putting the health and lives of Albertans at stake.

You know us as the food workers’ union, but we are not just a grocery store union. We are the eyes of ears of public health in very large public places. These places see thousands of Albertans attend upon them every day. These places are grocery stores.

The 15% threshold is not working. These stores can still see 500 people in them at a time without any means to enforce social distancing, and consequently a mockery is being made of the desperate need for meaningful public health measures.

We are seeing 500 people jammed into, for example, the frontends of Real Canadian Superstores without any technical breach of the 15% guidelines. Attached is one photo of a typical situation at the frontend of a Superstore.

We request urgent, immediate, and sensible amendments to health regulations and urgent and immediate attendance upon supermarkets by enforcement officers.

The science is clear. Supermarkets are both part of the community and are communities in and of themselves. They can be a place with very heightened risks of transmission. We can think of few other places with such a large degree of population density.

We urgently ask that your attention to this is immediate given the time of year. Time is of the essence.

Sincerely,

Thomas Hesse  
President, UFCW Local 401

Cc: Richelle Stewart  
Chris O’Halloran  
Michael Hughes  
Matt Fox  
Crystal Ducharme

United Food and Commercial Workers Canada Union, Local No. 401